

Visitor Programs and Events

Winter 2015

New York – *Listings for Brooklyn & Queens*

"Armchair to armchair experience" is the term often used to describe the full range of planning, visiting and savoring a visit to a park or historic site. Perhaps you can recall deciding on a destination, searching the internet, making the trip, and then enjoying the photographs, souvenirs and experience afterwards.

As we continue the celebration of the Centennial of the NPS and the focus of Find Your Park, winter is a perfect time to explore local indoor historic sites and to plan your warm weather excursions.

There are twenty-two unique NPS sites in the greater NYC harbor area of which Gateway is the largest in acreage. Here is a link to the National Parks of New York Harbor (NPNH)

<http://www.nps.gov/npnh/index.htm>

And here is a link to a map of the NPNH <http://www.nps.gov/npnh/planyourvisit/maps.htm> How many of these sites have you visited?

Winter is a good time to explore some of the great indoor sites in the area. You can learn about immigration history by visiting Ellis Island and the Lower Eastside Tenement Museum. If you're in the Wall Street area, check out Federal Hall, St. Paul's Chapel where Washington's pew is displayed and then go to African Burial Ground a few blocks up Broadway.

A bit further out you can visit Sagamore Hill, in Oyster Bay, Long Island, <http://www.nps.gov/sahi/index.htm> recently reopened after being under renovation for more than two years. This shingle style gilded age home was the only permanent home that Theodore Roosevelt owned and its furnishings are 90% original to the family.

In New Jersey the Thomas Edison National Historical Park, in West Orange, NJ, <http://www.nps.gov/edis/index.htm> presents the home and laboratory of America's most famous inventor.



There will be many days this winter when planning your warm weather trips can provide much pleasure. The ease of exploring and discovery via the internet makes it easy to put together trips built around a theme and/or a geographic area.

Often the area you choose will also present a theme to explore. Boston, for example, provides a wonderful array of Revolutionary War sites, as does Philadelphia. And if colonial history is your interest then a trip to Williamsburg, VA may be in order. But whatever your theme, interest and geographic area may be, go explore and Find Your Park.

There are activities at Gateway for you to enjoy during these winter months. Check out the Guide to see what's available. Perhaps you wish to join us for some of the traditional holiday walks, or the cross country skiing on first snowfall.

Getting out on your own on sunny days can give you some bracing exercise and that breath of fresh air that you need, as long as you are properly dressed for the weather. Remember that it can be at least ten degrees colder near the shore and the wind across Jamaica Bay or off the ocean can be incredibly fierce.

Safe Harbor Gateway Marina, by Martin Tjiattas, was an entry in our 2015 Find Your Park Photo Contest.

But when the weather is really bad, and you're in your armchair savoring memories of warm weather and past experiences, don't forget to plan for next season, Spring is not that far away. Have a safe and wonderful holiday season. –C. Markis

Change of Hours for Visitor Centers Beginning November 15

To best address visitor needs while effectively utilizing our staff resources, we are modifying the hours of operation of our Visitor Centers from November 15 through March 5

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge:

Wednesday through Sunday,
10 AM to 4 PM

Ryan Visitor Center

Wednesday through Sunday,
10 AM to 4 PM

Sandy Hook Lighthouse Keepers

Quarters: Sunday through Saturday,
10 AM to 4 PM

We will resume 7-day operation,
from 9AM to 5PM on March 6, 2016

Programs – December

First Snowfall

Cross Country Skiing

Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn

Aviator Sports Parking Lot

First Snowfall

Follow the cross country ski trail through the North 40. A National Park Service Ranger will cut a track at first snow. Call 718 338 3799 for trail conditions.

Dead Horse Bay: New York's Best Kept Secret

Floyd Bennett Field

Main Entrance Ranger Station

Sunday, December 6

10AM – 12PM

Hike the trails and shoreline at Dead Horse Bay with Mickey Maxwell Cohen, American Littoral Society naturalist, author of *Discovering the Trails of Dead Horse Bay*. Explore the nature and fascinating history of this little known area. Sturdy footwear is essential. This is an American Littoral Society/Gateway NRA Partnership Program. ♥ 2 miles

Airplanes! Airplanes!

Ryan Visitor Center

Floyd Bennett

Thursday, December 8,

1 PM – 2 PM

Floyd Bennett Field was home to New York City's first municipal airport.

Children ages four to six, visit the Golden Age Discovery Zone for a story teaching children about airplanes and create your own picture to take home. Siblings welcome.

Have a Hoot with a Ranger!

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Queens

Saturday, December 12

1PM – 2PM

Junior Rangers are invited to an owl adventure. Learn about beautiful birds and their diet by investigating owl pellets. Be prepared to take a hike along the west pond trail to search for owl habitat.

Stargazing

Floyd Bennett Field

Community Garden

Friday, December 18

7:30PM-9:30PM

Come gaze at the wonders of the night sky over Floyd Bennett Field with the Amateur Astronomers Association.

Weather permitting; clear or partly cloudy skies only.

Winter Birds of Jamaica Bay

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

Saturday, December 19

10AM-1PM

Meet at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge for a hike around the pond and gardens to look for late migrants and winter birds arriving. Learn to identify many species and how birds and other wildlife survive winter. Leader: Don Riepe. With American Littoral Society and NYC Audubon. For information and reservations, call (718) 474-0896; e-mail: donriepe@gmail.com. ♥ 2 miles

Holidays for the Birds

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

Sunday, December 20

2PM – 3PM

It's easy to get wrapped up in gifts, decorations and holiday plans this time of year, but what about the birds? Join a ranger for a reading of Night Tree by Eve Bunting and follow up by making peanut butter pinecones for your backyard birds.

New Year's Day Beach Walk

Fort Tilden, Building 1

Friday, January 1

11AM – 1PM

Meet at Fort Tilden in Breezy Point for a brisk hike along the beach, dunes and woods to welcome in the New Year. Look for Saw-whet and Snowy Owls. Warm up and enjoy light refreshments afterward at the Rockaway Artists Alliance building. Leaders: Mickey Cohen and Don Riepe. With American Littoral Society and NYC Audubon. ♥ 2 miles

The Prepared Paddler

Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn

Ryan Visitors Center

Tuesday, January 5

6:30 n m - 8:30 n m

Interested in going paddling in Jamaica Bay? Get an overview of paddling best practices. Learn about the skills and equipment you will need, so you can plan your next trip. Space is limited; call 718/338 3799 to make a reservation.

Introduction to Volunteering at Gateway NRA

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

Saturday, January 9

11AM – 1PM

It's a New Year and you've got resolutions to fulfill, right? Lose weight, enjoy life to the fullest, learn something exciting, staying fit and healthy - these are all popular resolutions and being a volunteer at! Join park staff staff for a presentation on volunteer opportunities. Speak with current volunteers about what they do.

How Birds Survive Winter

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

Sunday January 10

1PM – 2PM

Cold weather got you down? Imagine you are a bird overwintering outdoors in Jamaica Bay! Food is scarce, the winds are harsh and there are definitely no electric blankets or hot chocolate to warm you up. Come to the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge for a presentation and a brief walk as we explore winter survival in the animal kingdom!

Jackie Cochran, Aviatix

Ryan Visitor Center

Floyd Bennett Field

Thursday, January 21

1PM – 2PM

Jacqueline (Jackie) Cochran, one of the most fascinating women in the field of aviation, broke numerous aviation records, served as director of the WASPS during WWII, became our first woman test pilot, and even owned a cosmetics company. Join us for a lecture and power point program about this versatile woman flyer.

Hike the Trails of the North

Forty Natural Area

Floyd Bennett Field

Ryan Visitor Center

Sunday, January 24

10AM – 12PM

It's winter, Join American Littoral Society naturalist Mickey Maxwell Cohen to discover the enigmas of the winter woods. Participants will carpool from the Ryan Visitor Center to the North Forty trailhead. A magnifying glass will be helpful. This is an American Littoral Society/Gateway NRA Partnership Program. ♥ 2 miles

Experience the Winter Beach at Fort Tilden

Building 1 at Fort Tilden

Sunday, February 7

11AM – 1PM

The sun, moon and earth will be in position on this day to create a notable low tide. Explore the intertidal zone and walk the sea floor with American Littoral Society naturalist, Mickey Maxwell Cohen, author of *Adventures at the Beach* to observe the usually-hidden biological treasures from beyond the tides. This is an American Littoral Society/Gateway NRA Partnership Program. ♥ 2 miles

Gateway is for Lovers

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

Sunday, February 14

2PM-3PM

Think humans are the only species that have gossip-worthy relationships? Think again! From symbiotic to parasitic, the animal world is filled with eye raising liaisons as well. Bring a date or come stag and join us on Valentine's Day for this presentation. Hey, maybe you'll find your soulmate.

Become a Centennial Junior Ranger!

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

Wednesday, February 17

11AM – 12PM

Help us celebrate the National Park Service Centennial. Find your Park! Choose your favorite National Park and help design and draw a mural, assisted by a park ranger. Materials will be provided. Earn a Junior Ranger badge in the process.

Balance Challenge for Children

Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn

Ryan Visitors Center

Wednesday, February 17

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Balance and flexibility are important parts of healthy living. Children ages 6 – 12 will enjoy a host of fun balance and flexibility exercises that they can also do at home. Space is limited; call 718/338 3799 to make a reservation.

Have a Hoot with a Ranger!

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Queens

Thursday, February 18

12PM – 1PM

Junior Rangers are invited to an owl adventure. Learn about beautiful birds and their diet by investigating owl pellets. Be prepared to take a hike along the west pond trail to search for owl habitat. ♥ 1 mile

Talkin' Trees

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge ♥

Friday, February 19

12PM-1PM

Children and their families are invited to join a Ranger for a winter walk around the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge as we learn about trees in the area. Find out the many reasons why trees are essential to life on this planet as well as simple tips to identify them. ♥ 1 mile

Winter Thaw Bird Walk

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

Saturday, February 27

10AM – 1PM

Meet at the Jamaica Bay Refuge for a hike around the ponds and gardens to look for very early signs of spring as well as late winter birds. Leader: Don Riepe. For reservations, call (718) 474-0896 or e-mail donriepe@gmail.com. With American Littoral Society and NYC Audubon. ♥ 2 miles

Get Your Head in the Clouds

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Queens

Saturday February 27

2PM – 3:30PM

Clouds are everywhere we go! They bring us different types of weather, have inspired art and folklore and even help us in studying climate change. Join us for weather related experiments and sharpen your meteorological skills with a weather walk around the refuge.

Kayak Volunteer Corps Sunrise Paddles

Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn

Seaplane Ramp

Variable Weekday Mornings

6:00 a.m. – 7:30 a.m.

If you are already a prepared four season paddler and would like to kayak with other skilled paddlers, join our Kayak Volunteer Corps. Stay in good form and be ready to share your skills this spring with the public paddling program. Please call 718 338-3799, for more information.

The ♥ symbol denotes a hike or walk of moderate activity. Come enjoy nature and the park as you get some exercise.

Do you receive email notifications of Gateway's programs and events? If you are not on our mailing list and would like to be, please send a message to Charles_Markis@nps.gov, with 'program guide' in the subject line and we will add you.